On February 9, 2019, white nationalists posted anti-immigrant slogans at the University of Utah and other sites in Salt Lake City. “Make America Beautiful Again” read a banner at Ensign Peak. The underlying message: Make America White Again. In response, Utah Sierra Club’s Director, Ashley Soltysiak, proceeded to join 25 other local green’ group leaders in issuing a public statement condemning racism and welcoming immigrants to our state.

In the joint press statement, Ashley said “The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club stands firmly in solidarity with immigrant communities and against the hate-mongering message of white supremacy.”

Coincidentally, the white racist events occurred nine days after renowned environmental justice expert

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
Robert D. Bullard addressed a packed auditorium at the University of Utah's S.J. Quinney College of Law. The topic of Bullard's presentation: Environmental Racism. Perhaps the Virginia-based Identity Europa racist group saw Bullard's visit as an opportunity to respond with its supremacist hate speech. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that hate groups are on the rise in the U.S. and that the number of hate groups in Utah has tripled since 2015. The Utah Legislature in its recently concluded session, saw the need to enhance penalties for hate crimes.

Some may wonder what business an environmental group has in taking public stands on racism. When Sierra Club ran a membership survey in 1972, they found the majority opposed to addressing “conservation problems of such special groups as the urban poor and ethnic minorities.” And on the national Sierra Club’s current Equity FAQ web page, the first question is, “Why doesn’t Sierra Club just stick to the mission of advocating for the environment (not social issues)?”

The Utah Chapter’s director gave the short answer in her press statement: “Environmental justice is inherently a social justice issue.” But we’ll get to national Sierra Club’s answer later in this article. First, let’s take a look at the evolving history of the Sierra Club’s development of a social justice ethic.

In 1971, SC’S San Francisco Chapter established the Inner City Outings (ICO) program as a community outreach effort to provide nature outings for urban youth and adults with limited access to the outdoors. SC founder John Muir had said that “there is a love of wild nature in everybody,” but Club members recognized that low-income and minority citizens rarely enjoy opportunities to explore, enjoy, and protect the environment. In 1976, ICO was adopted by chapters nationwide and later renamed Inspiring Connections Outdoors. Today, ICO programs annually conduct more than 900 outings for some 14,000 participants. ICO supports Muir’s assertion that people who experience wildness firsthand are much more likely to preserve it for future generations. All people.

The next major step came two decades later, in 1991, with the founding of the Sierra Student Coalition. The SSC offers training programs and leadership opportunities for high school and college students “working for just, sustainable communities and the protection of the environment.” Every year, the coalition conducts a one-week leadership training Summer Program (SPROG) and a 10-week intensive Climate Justice League program for young community organizers. The Utah Chapter has provided financial assistance for youth Utahans participating in SPROG.

In 1993, SC initiated its Environmental Justice Program (EJP), recognizing that, “to achieve our mission of environmental protection and a sustainable future for the planet, we must attain social justice and human rights at home and around the globe.” The EJP concluded that this goal must promote “dialogue, increased understanding and appropriate action.” Undergirding “the right to a clean and healthy environment for all people,” EJP advocates for the rights to democracy, participation in decision-making, equal protection, information, sustainable conditions, current and generational equity, and indigenous culture.

Shortly after EJP was formed, Sierra Club Books published Robert D. Bullard’s Unthinkables: Environmental Justice & Communities of Color. That year, 1994, also saw a U.S. presidential order (12980) authorizing an inquiry “into disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income people.” In 1999, the disparities at home and abroad have arguably worsened.

Two decades after Unequal Protection, the NAACP’s 2014 “Just Energy Policies” report reminded Americans that “low-income neighborhoods and communities of color suffer more of the direct health, educational, and economic consequences” from energy production facilities, especially coal.

NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program Director Jacqui Patterson later noted that “zip code is the number one predictor of environmental health.” Patterson concluded by noting that, “the most significant determinant of which zip codes will host toxic facilities is race.” On the occasion of the 2019 State of the Union address, NAACP National Board Chair Leon W. Russell declared that “Taking on the climate crisis and attacking economic injustice go hand in hand.”

Returning to a brief history of the Sierra Club’s social justice initiatives: “The Club held its first “Dismantling Racism Training” in 2002, followed by creation of a Diversity Council in 2006. Diversity is a key component of SC’S environmental justice policies, plans, and programs for the next ten years.” Soon after, the Sierra Club added two new principles, Equity and Inclusion to form the tripartite credo. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

According to the DEI framework, Diversity embodies a wide variety of social and cultural characteristics: race, gender expression and identity, (dis)ability, sexuality, immigration status, class background, religious affiliation, age, and more. Equity means guaranteeing “fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to eliminate and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.” Inclusion involves “creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate.”

In 2014, SC leadership adopted the Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing to inform the organization’s DEI mission implementation. First drafted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice in 1996, the six Jemez Principles chart a transformative process for individuals, the organization, and the nature of community engagement. In short form, they are:

1. be inclusive (the “big tent” metaphor);
2. emphasize bottom-up organizing;
3. let people speak for themselves;
4. work together in solidarity and mutuality;
5. build just relationships among ourselves;
6. commit to self-transformation.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5
Two Critical Canyon Planning Processes Need Your Input

by Will McCarville

Two Wasatch Front planning processes are currently under way. The first study specifically addresses Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) summer and winter transportation, parking, and other major access issues. This study is called "The Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS: Finding Solutions For Today." The second study looks beyond LCC and begins to incorporate transportation solutions for Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC), and perhaps even as far as Summit County. It is called the "Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Action Plan (CCTAP): Solutions For The Future." Both will forever alter our canyons and, unless we weigh in now, will likely result in a much more highly developed Wasatch.

LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON EIS

The state government allocated $65 million dollars to address transportation issues in LCC. The current NEPA process kicked off with a draft Notice of Intent (NOI) open for public comment from March 5 to May 3, 2019, which has since been indefinitely extended. This will be followed by additional steps and opportunities for public comments. The project area is SR 219 from the intersection with SR 190 (Big Cottonwood Canyon Road) through Cottonwood Heights (Wasatch Boulevard) to its end at Alta, and includes the bypass road through Snowbird. The road can be divided into two parts: first is the urban segment used by Cottonwood Heights residents, recreation traffic and commuters. The second is the mountain segment used by recreation users heading up Canyon. Recreation activities include resort and backcountry skiing, hiking, biking, rock climbing, and fishing. LCC, which contains some 2.1 million annual visitors, is also an important watershed area for the Salt Lake Valley. Parking is located at resorts, some trail heads, park and ride lots, and along the road itself. Keep in mind the Forest Service current management plan holds parking areas to levels established in 2000. UTA provides winter ski bus service, though no summer bus service is available. The overall objective is to enhance safety, improve mobility of vehicles up the canyon, improve the operation of key intersections and parking at trailheads, and improve mobility of vehicles in Cottonwood Heights on Wasatch Boulevard. This will all be done, presumably while addressing environmental requirements and protecting our watershed. Some modifications have already been installed, like the traffic calming structures at the parking lot intersection by Alta and Snowbird. So what should you think about when making comments? Here are a few ideas:

The visitor carrying capacity for LCC needs to be determined as part of the EIS. We simply cannot move forward allowing transportation to increase unless and until we know the impacts of visitation on the canyon's environment.

The end game should be the elimination of cars with a combination to reduce mass transportation, summer and winter. Such a scenario would require minimal parking in the canyon. So any parking lot modifications need to be temporary as the trailhead will be served by mass transportation. This also means that large parking facilities will eventually be required at key locations to interface between cars and the transportation traveling up the Canyon. These must be located in spots removed from the mouth of the canyon, areas with excellent traffic circulation, and with an eye toward eventual connections to the mass transportation system developing in the center of the valley.

Mass transportation can ultimately be a useful tool to control visitor use; much like the shuttles in Zion that have so effectively limited visitor pressure. Just because we can get more people up Canyon does not mean we should ignore impacts and degradation of the watershed and canyon environment.

COTTONWOOD CANYONS TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

The CCTAP envisions broader transportation solutions for both Cottonwood canyons as well as over Park City. The current plan considers gondolas up both canyons, and connection between Alta and Brighton. Another link will connect Brighton with Park City. A proposed rail line could go up LCC and pass through a tunnel to the top of BCC. Greater enhanced bus service is another option. You can see the plans at CCTAP Plans and comment: cottonwoodcanyons@utah.gov. As you can imagine, these ideas, as presently envisioned, would substantially alter our mountains. Here is our take:

Just as the visitor carrying capacity of LCC needs to be determined, so should that of BCC. Perhaps the studies should be conducted simultaneously. This would provide a fact-based approach, a carefully considered alternative to what has become a constant search to see how many more people we can squeeze into the canyons. As with Little Cottonwood Canyon, the goal in BCC should be to eliminate private vehicles in BCC (apart from those owned by Canyon homeowners.)

Gondola ski interconnects between LCC and BCC and Park City are unacceptable as transportation solutions. For example: How would a gondola service the hiking and biking trails along the canyon? How would a train up LCC solve BCC trailhead-related transportation problems? Any mass transportation solution has to service recreation trail heads all along the Canyon. No additional transportation corridors for gondolas and trains should be built up LCC or BCC. The current roads will always be needed for servicing the resorts and private landowners. No, we fought the battle against Ski Link several years ago, and we do not support ski area interconnects going forward.

Any transportation option should preserve viewpoints, lower impacts on the environment and protect the integrity of our wilderness areas. Transportation solutions such as tolling for private cars need to provide access to the canyon for all communities.

The canyons are used for all four seasons; ski area use should not dominate transportation solutions.

So these are a few ideas for you to ponder as we go through these processes. Please provide your comments, because we believe the future of our Wasatch Mountains is at a critical point. Once we adopt future solutions, there will be no turning back.
Sierra Club Supports Children’s Climate Lawsuit

by Stan Holmes

“The Sierra Club is proud to support these brave kids who are showing the world what true climate leadership is by speaking truth to power, seeking their day in court, and holding the U.S. government accountable for protecting their lives and their future.”

O
n March 15, 2019, young people across the U.S. and around the world walked out of their classrooms to protest decades of negligence by elder generations who have shown to be unwilling to seriously tackle climate change. In Salt Lake City, the Youth Climate Strike rally at Utah’s State Capitol drew more than 400 students. West High School senior and rally organizer Midika Banuri said, “If our leaders fail to take climate action now, the burden of climate change will be on my generation.” Ms. Banuri underscored student solidarity against such practices as leasing for new oil and gas development on federal lands when she said, “Compromise is not an option.”

The Sierra Club is listening to Banuri and her peers across the country. In addition to an array of community organizing and legislative programs aimed directly at mitigating climate change, the Sierra Club remains a formidable youth ally on the legal front. Joining organizations as diverse as the U.S. League of Women Voters and Our Children’s Trust, national Sierra Club has filed friend-of-the-court (amicus curiae) motions supporting young plaintiffs in the Juliana vs. United States case. Our state chapters are also taking action in supporting these youth programs.

Juliana vs. U.S., first filed in 2015, pins 21 young Oregonians against the federal executive branch. Kelsey Juliana and friends argue that presidential administrations going back to the 20th century have perpetrated a fossil fuel economy despite knowledge of the dire climate consequences. They contend the U.S. government has been violating their Constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property.

Sierra Club agrees, charging that “The United States government has contributed to climate change by authorizing, encouraging, and sponsoring activities resulting in the combustion of greenhouse gases.” The government has advanced these policies fully aware of the harm that fossil fuel combustion poses to the climate. “In its most recent filing, March 1, 2019, the Sierra Club argues that Juliana youth plaintiffs have “a due process right to a sustainable climate and a due process right to be protected against a state-created climate danger.”

According to Executive Director Michael Brune, “The Sierra Club is proud to support these brave kids who are showing the world what true climate leadership is by speaking truth to power, seeking their day in court, and holding the U.S. government accountable for protecting their lives and their future.”

In Utah, young climate activists recently experienced a setback when the BLM issued 135,000 acres for oil and gas development. But at the same time, judicial decisions blocking Trump administration attempts to drill in the Arctic and Atlantic oceans, and in Wyoming and Colorado, offer rays of hope as Generation Z strives to gain control of its future.

Small Modular Reactor Project

by Sarah Fields

T
he Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS) is planning to site a NuScale-design Small Modular Nuclear Reactor (SMR) at the Department of Energy (DOE) Idaho National Lab (INL). NuScale Power LLC, of Portland, Oregon, has submitted a Design Certification Application (DCA) to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for review and approval. UAMPS is a group of over 40 municipal electrical utilities, located primarily in Utah, but also in California, Oregon, New Mexico, Idaho, and a few other states. Thirty of the municipalities voted in 2018 to participate in Part 1 of Phase 1 of the project. There will be a vote on Part 2 of Phase 1, the license application phase, with greater financial commitment within the next few months. This first-of-its-kind reactor will be funded by UAMPS member ratepayers, the DOE, NuScale, and other possible utilities, government entities, and investors. UAMPS estimates the cost of construction to be the total costs for licensing, construction, operation, and decommissioning.

UAMPS must submit a Combined Construction and Operation License Application (COAL) to the NRC in order to site the reactor. The 12-unit SMR will produce 600 Megawatts of gross energy. NuScale and UAMPS have stated that the reactor will produce an additional 120 MWe, with no clear path to that 20% power uprate. The SMR will produce more high-level reactor waste per MWe than conventional, larger light water reactors. There is still no permanent solution for the disposal of irradiated fuel rods in the US, which is the responsibility of the DOE. Monthly and yearly costs to the municipal utility ratepayers are unknown.

The NRC approval of the DCA involves a Rulemaking, which will take at least a year after the NRC approves the Final Safety Evaluation Report in late 2020 or early 2021. UAMPS has stated that they will submit a COAL in 2020, with operations of the 12-module reactor commencing in 2027. The UAMPS schedule is unrealistic. There are a number of technical, regulatory, financial, and other issues that must be resolved before the reactor is constructed and commences operation.

If any Club member lives in, or has contracts with citizens in, a UAMPS-member community and wishes additional information or can submit written or oral comments at UAMPS-member meetings, please contact Sarah Fields, sarah@uraniumwatch.org or 435-260-8384.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
- UAMPS members: https://www.uamps.com/ Members
- NuScale Design Certification: https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/design-cert/nuscale.html
- Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining: http://ogm.utah.gov/minerals/Minerals/PDO/angularmineralsfilesbypermitinfo.php
- Uranium Mine and Mill News

SAVE THE DATE — MAY 18
WHITE MESA MILL SPIRITUAL WALK AND MARCH

Please join the third annual White Mesa Spiritual Walk and Protest March on Saturday, May 18. Gather between 10 and 11 am at the White Mesa Ute Community Center, Willow Street, San Juan County. The March to the White Mesa Uranium Mill is about 4 miles.

The Community Center is off of Hwy. 191, between Blanding and Bluff. Turn west at the White Mesa Mobil Gas Station, then left on Willow Street. Look for a large red building with “White Mesa Community Center” written in white letters on the side. Wear comfortable shoes, sun hat, and bring plenty of water! For more information, call White Mesa Concerned Community (435) 485-0265.

LA SAL MINES COMPLEX (LOCATED IN LA SAL, UT)

Energy Fuels is refurbishing the La Sal Mines Complex, at the base of the La Sal Mountains in northern San Juan County. The company is sampling ore to determine the economic feasibility of reopening the Complex for the production of uranium/vanadium ore.

In 2018, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service approved the expansion of the Pandora Mine, part of the Complex. Energy Fuels has plans to expand the Complex underground to the west and north, with additional exploratory drilling and installation of ventilation shafts.

OTHER ENERGY FUELS’ MINES

Canyon Mine - The Canyon Mine, on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, is only partially developed. Energy Fuels suspended further development underground. The mine has problems related to the removal of water from the mine during development and future operation. Although the ore contains both uranium and vanadium, Energy Fuels does not yet have the capability to also remove copper at the White Mesa Mill.

Daneiros Mine - The Daneiros Mine, near Natural Bridges National Monument, is on standby. The BLM has approved the expansion of the Mine to 65 acres, which has been appealed by The Grand Canyon Trust. The Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining has yet to approve the expansion to a larger mining operation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
- Division of Oil, Gas & Mining Files: http://ogm.utah.gov/minerals/Minerals/PDO/ angularmineralsfilesbypermitinfo.php
- Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining: http://ogm.utah.gov/minerals/Minerals/PDO/angularmineralsfilesbypermitinfo.php
Our Land
Green New Deal and the Sierra Club

by Stan Holmes

On February 7, 2019, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced a resolution, “Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal.” H.R.109 begins with the charge that “human activity is the dominant cause of observed climate change over the past century” and cites a vast array of related damages to the natural and human environments. The resolution calls a list-to-action whose proposed measures range from reducing and removing greenhouse gasses to establishing universal health care, respecting indigenous peoples’ and organized labor rights, clean energy programs and job creation.

The Sierra Club’s take on the Green New Deal legislation is a bit more sophisticated than Mike Lee’s “Reagan-on-a-Dinosaur” sci-fi denial parody on the U.S. Senate floor and significantly less embarrassing for Utahns. Ben Beachy, of the Sierra Club’s Living Economy Program, weaves many elements of H.R.109 into the Sierra Club’s plan for a successful Green New Deal (GND) that must include: tackling the climate crisis and pollution;

- creating good, living-wage jobs; and counteracting racial and economic inequality. With sustainable climate, jobs and equity goals in mind, Beachy suggests five potential building blocks for a Green New Deal. The Club would set pollution-reducing standards for products purchased with tax dollars, require “family sustaining” wages, and promote jobs in low-income communities.

- A 4 Green Brigade: Patterned on the original New Deal’s Civilian Conservation Corps, a GND green jobs program would employ thousands of people to restore essential ecosystems nationwide. Program priorities would be forest growth and fire safety near urban-wild interface areas, wetlands restoration, and hazardous waste cleanup projects to ensure clean air and water for all.

- 5 Climate-Friendly Farming: Offering family farmers training and funds to expand sustainable agricultural practices such as new composting techniques, the use of seasonal cover crops, reduced tillage, and additional methods to better withstand droughts. A key aim is empowering small farms to help offset the negative environmental impacts of industrial agriculture. In a press statement applauding H.R.109, SC Director Michael Brune said that the GND proposal “offer a bold plan to tackle the climate crisis and inequality — two of the defining crises of our time — at the speed of climate change and science and justice demand. A Green New Deal presents the opportunity to help transition from an economy of low wages and toxic pollution to one driven by dignified work and 100 percent clean energy.”

As a post-script: While Sen. Lee’s announced supply side solution prescriptions of providing for a new economy of cheap fossil fuels and underdeveloping renewable energy-based “smart grid.”

Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2
The Club’s next Strategic Plan (2015), citing the severity of the climate crisis, embraced the motto of the People’s Climate March that “to change everything, we need everyone” and added the Green Brigade to the Sierra Club’s official Movement Organizing Manual. The Strategic Plan set goals “intended to enlist every possible ally to our cause, to reinvigorate our historical conservation and outings programs, and to work toward building a Sierra Club that reflects the true diversity of America.”

In 2016-17, however, with the election of Donald J. Trump and increased frequency of hate crimes, the Sierra Club replaced diversity with “justice” and formed a new Department of Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (EIJ). According to EIJ director Nellis Kennedy-Howard, a key element of the department’s mission is “to demonstrate our unequivocal solidarity with justice movements in and outside the environmental movement.” One might be reminded of Martin Luther King’s 1963 Birmingham Jail declaration that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Seeking justice means seeking fairness and balance for individual and societal actions past, present, and future.

Sierra Club’s switch from DEI to EIJ resulted not only from Trump’s entering the White House, but also from the realization that a too-narrow focus on achieving diversity can result in tokenism. Members and leaders recruited for their racial and ethnic identities can find themselves alienated from an organization that has inadequately embraced equity principles and programs. An internal study confirmed that the Club did have a problem with retaining people of color on staff. This was one of several issues identified in Green 2.0’s 2014 report that found ‘Big Green’ organizations like the Club overwhelmingly white and middle-class.

Tackling this is the first step beyond seeking diversity, the new EIJ’s effort to “change everything, we need everyone” and added the Green Brigade to the Sierra Club’s official Movement Organizing Manual. The Strategic Plan set goals “intended to enlist every possible ally to our cause, to reinvigorate our historical conservation and outings programs, and to work toward building a Sierra Club that reflects the true diversity of America.”

In 2016-17, however, with the election of Donald J. Trump and increased frequency of hate crimes, the Sierra Club replaced diversity with “justice” and formed a new Department of Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (EIJ). According to EIJ director Nellis Kennedy-Howard, a key element of the department’s mission is “to demonstrate our unequivocal solidarity with justice movements in and outside the environmental movement.” One might be reminded of Martin Luther King’s 1963 Birmingham Jail declaration that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Seeking justice means seeking fairness and balance for individual and societal actions past, present, and future.

Sierra Club’s switch from DEI to EIJ resulted not only from Trump’s entering the White House, but also from the realization that a too-narrow focus on achieving diversity can result in tokenism. Members and leaders recruited for their racial and ethnic identities can find themselves alienated from an organization that has inadequately embraced equity principles and programs. An internal study confirmed that the Club did have a problem with retaining people of color on staff. This was one of several issues identified in Green 2.0’s 2014 report that found ‘Big Green’ organizations like the Club overwhelmingly white and middle-class.

Tackling this is the first step beyond seeking diversity, the new EIJ’s effort to notify the justice goal that every Sierra Club staff member has in their individual work-plan.

National SC’s Equity Department has an EIJ Support Team that “supports and coaches the organization’s 64 chapters across the U.S. and Puerto Rico in developing and work furthering intersectional justice.” Last September, the Support Team conducted a training for Utah Sierra Club’s Ex-Com staff member in conjunction with our annual Jamboree. Carly Ferro is the Chapter staff person leading Utah’s EIJ Task Force, with support from national SC staff Lindsay Beebe. On the Ex-Co., Stan Holmes is responsible for overseeing EIJ activities.

The Utah Chapter’s Equity Task Force began in October 2017, with Carly leading a group that included representatives from BYU, the U of U, UVU, and Westminster College environment groups along with Sierra Club public lands advocates. Among the group’s first set of agreements were adherence to the Jemez Principles and promotion of equity and justice values throughout the chapter-wide. They set out to, “Broaden the scope of the Chapter’s outreach audiences through events, actions, and partnerships.”

To identify potential partners, the Task Force began a process called “community mapping” or “community needs assessment” which, as described in the Sierra Club’s Movement Organizing Manual, helps frame the outreach by identifying community-specific challenges, potential impacts, and existing leadership. The Task Force has been building a bank of Partnership Profiles across the broader Utah community. Successful partnership activities since 2017 have included coordinated environmental justice presentations with the NAACP’s Salt Lake Chapter, clean-up events with Jordan River Community Initiative groups, and voter registration efforts with Comunidades Unidas, League of Women Voters, Elders Rising, and other civic empowerment activities.

In January 2018, the Equity Task Force helped create an inter-group Environmental Justice Alliance, now referred to as Equity Partners. Representatives from Utah Sierra Club, SUWA, Racially Just Utah, Ute PAC, HEAL Utah, NAACP Comunidades Unidas, and other social justice advocacy groups meet monthly to share equity, justice news, ideas, and opportunities for collaboration. Partners see the need to strengthen relationships with individuals, families, and groups that have traditionally been marginalized not only from the mainstream political power processes but also from meaningful inclusion with environmental groups.

One important tenet of Equity Partners is the belief that relationship building should be transformational, not transactional. No individual agenda is paramount, nor are relationships to be viewed as merely quid pro quo. All parties have unique needs and resources to share toward achieving greater justice that is to everyone’s benefit. At one founding member of Equity Partners acknowledged, this will sometimes mean we may stand outside the traditional issues area of an environmental group.

Thanks to Equity Partners’ interactions, Utah Sierra Club members have gained knowledge of the Red Deal Project’s voter registration campaign in the Navajo communities of San Juan County and the community health initiatives in Latinx neighborhoods along the Salt River.

Our allied groups know more about the Chapter’s outreach efforts, such as Ready For 100 municipal clean energy resolutions and the work we do to support the Utah Youth Environmental Solutions coalition. Carly Ferro can provide a much longer list of accomplishments the Utah Sierra Club has realized through the Equity Task Force and Equity Partners. <carly.ferro@ sierrachub.org> This brings us back to the FAQ page of the national Sierra Club’s equity website, which asks:

Q. Why doesn’t Sierra Club just stick to the mission of advocating for the environment?

A. “Our mission statement says the Sierra Club will “enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment.” It would be easy to retreat, keep our heads down and focus narrowly on what are traditionally known as “our issues.” But justice, equity, and inclusion are our issues. We have a duty to stand with those who are facing persecution on the basis of their race, religion, gender, sexuality or other marginalized identity. Solidarity is our only hope of creating the world we want.”

Perhaps Chapter Ex.Com. Chair Will McCartney said what he introduced last September’s equity training to fellow board members and staff. “The Sierra Club is undergoing a transformation from an organization that is overwhelming white and male-dominated, to one that incorporates diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. This reflects the ongoing changes to America’s demographics, and it also recognizes we are all on this earth together, and must all work together to protect our planet.”

“NuFF said. Except for the question, “What role would you like to play?”
OurLand

Groundhog Day is Not Just in February
by Lisa Rutherford

When the groundhog emerged in early February to conduct his annual ritual – either warning us of more winter or delighting us with the coming of spring – I thought about the ‘groundhog’ universe in our area of Southern Utah. Day after day the same issues emerge: The Lake Powell Pipeline and the Northern Corridor. My last Sierra article reviewed results from the recent Lake Powell Pipeline public comment period conducted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This month’s water news has to do with Utah’s Division of Water Resources (UDWRe) and their water conservation goals plan for the state. A public online survey was conducted last fall, and public meetings were held. But by early 2019 there was still no word of an actual plan. Finally, in mid-February word came that the plan would not be available for public comment until March. What was the holdup? It seems the 2019 legislative session offered UDWRe an opportunity to use the plan to some advantage. HB143 (Water Conservation Plan Amendments) would have encouraged conservation by having cities “evaluate” what it would take to reach 175 gallons per capita per day (gpcd). Apparently, it didn’t suit the UDWRe, so they convinced legislators to hold the bill in committee.

This tactic did not sit well with one draft plan stakeholder: Utah Rivers Council (URC). URC, an advocate of public lands and conservation stakeholders, did not care for these backroom dealings. They put out a press release and published the entire plan, undercutting the UDWRe’s process. In URC’s defense, UDWRe knew the legislature’s schedule and should have worked harder to ensure transparency by getting the plan out publicly prior to the legislature convening. However, the plan’s stakeholder group was heavily biased toward the water district community. Perhaps UDWRe actually had a plan earlier and the water district stakeholders didn’t like it thereby slowing the process? Nevertheless, review of the plan clearly shows why 175 gpcd was a problem for the UDWRe and water district stakeholders. The draft plan’s future goals for 2065 average 219 gpcd with only the Provo River, Salt Lake and Weber River regions achieving better than 175 gpcd. The remaining six regions identified by the state have an average goal of 261, which includes Washington County (Lower Colorado River South region) at 259 gpcd. That’s down from Washington County’s current 303 gpcd, but really, can we do better in the next forty-six years? Other desert communities have already achieved that objective.

Then there is the Northern Corridor, a highway proposed to run through and disrupt our Red Cliffs NCA/Reserve (aka desert tortoise reserve), pushed vigorously by leaders. Fortunately, two bills in Congress that would have forced the highway by eliminating environmental requirements failed to move through the process. Now, we’re faced with the county and UDOT working in concert during the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) renewal process to push through their agenda. Contractors (Jacobs and SWCA) are working the renewal process using the county’s own traffic models, which may have questionable data and assumptions. SWCA representative reports that new policies came into existence after the 1995 HCP and those will be incorporated, including plans to accommodate the Northern Corridor. A full HCP revision is planned for March and NEPA NOI (Notice of Intent) planned in summer 2019. Vital options are not being considered fairly by planners and leaders, who are primarily considering cost issues rather than important environmental ones. At least opposition to a gas line through the area has seemed to prevail at this point. Perhaps highway opposition will, too.

Will these matters be settled by Groundhog Day 2020? Stay tuned!

The Keep Public Lands in Public Hands Campaign in 2019
by Lawson LeGate

Thanks to the Sierra Club’s Grassroots Network, the Utah Chapter’s Keep Public Lands in Public Hands (KPLPH) campaign is up and running in 2019. Our campaign stems from the Utah Legislature’s attempt to turn over all of the Bureau of Land Management lands, like national forests and wildlife refuges, to the state of Utah. Proposed wilderness and wilderness study areas would pass into state control.

If the state successfully manages to secure possession of these lands, they would not be bound by protective laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Loss of these protections would give the state flexibility to potentially streamline dirty fuel development that would tarnish the cultural, archaeolog- ical, sacred, and ecological values of our treasured landscapes. Given the pro-development and anti-environmental bias of many Utah politicians, the ability of citizens to secure long-term protection of Utah’s treasured landscapes would surely come to an end.

Beyond the environmental argument, economic analyses indicate the state would not be able to afford managing such lands, so that their passage into private hands would be an ever-present risk.

The KPLPH campaign strives to demonstrate Utahans’ desire to safeguard public lands. Utahans share concerns about a variety of issues and actions related to these lands. For example, Congress just passed a bill that includes wilderness and other protections for the wild San Rafael Swell. Likewise, the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments protect beloved rock canyons and lands sacred to Native American people. Many Utahns are fighting to prevent destructive dirty fuels drilling and coal mining. Citizens of Utah, like all Americans, have a common interest in the responsible stewardship of these unique natural resources. In a very real sense, our right to participate in decisions about the fate of the wild places we love derives from our common ownership of public lands.

KPLPH team members are in touch with others in Utah who would like their communities to take a stand in favor of America’s public lands. A few years ago, the Salt Lake City Council and mayor adopted a resolution in support of the ownership of public lands by all Americans. The resolution noted the importance of the recreational opportunities of public lands to residents of the city and urged Utah’s governor and legislature to end their land grab effort. The southern Utah town of Castle Valley soon followed suit. Then, thanks to the work of KPLPH volunteers, both Summit County and Park City adopted similar resolutions.

To help local citizens to achieve their objectives the KPLPH team is engaged in a number of activities in 2019. This year’s Utah Chapter budget will allow the KPLPH team to inaugurate an internship program. The intern will help to identify new campaign volunteers to expand the effectiveness of our grassroots activities.

Kelsey Gathson, one of our newest campai gn team members, has launched an effort to convince the Associated Students at the University of Utah (ASUU) to take a stand in favor of America’s public lands. Kelsey is also spearheading the formation of a University of Utah student public lands organization. You can reach her at kelseycailton@gmail.com.

We have new campaign buttons. Contact Lawson LeGate at lawson.legate@gmail.com if you would like one.

Allied Businesses and Organizations As a demonstration of support for keeping Public Lands in Public Hands, we are inviting Utah businesses and non-govern- mental organizations to adopt pro-public lands resolutions. Contact Becky Yih at bhys@gmail.com if you would like to suggest a business or organization that might be a candidate.

Volunteer for the Keep Public Lands in Public Hands Campaign If you’re someone who treasures our public lands heritage, join the Keep Public Lands in Public Hands campaign team. Contact Lawson LeGate at lawson.legate@gmail.com to learn how you can help.
UNCE Team Advances Ready for 100

by Chuck Brainard & Stan Holmes, UNCE Team volunteers

In another win for the environment, Cottonwood Heights is now the 102nd city in the US to sign on to the Sierra Club’s Ready for 100 campaign. On January 8, the Cottonwood Heights City Council voted unanimously to achieve 100 percent renewable energy for municipal buildings by 2022 and citywide by 2032. This milestone was achieved in large part through the involvement of the Utah Chapter’s Utah Needs Clean Energy (UNCE) team. Cottonwood Heights joins four other Utah local governments that have committed to Ready for 100: Salt Lake City, Park City, Moab, and Summit County.

Ready for 100 is a Sierra Club campaign to get local governments throughout the country to commit to 100 percent renewable energy by 2032. You can get more information at the Sierra Club website, www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100.

UNCE is a subcommittee of the Utah Sierra Club’s Conservation Committee. Beyond Coal Organizer Lindsay Beebe and Utah Chapter Executive Committee Member Stan Holmes are key members of that group. UNCE organizes solar workshops, film screenings, educational webinars, strategic planning, and other activities. UNCE spearheads the task of encouraging government entities to commit to Ready for 100.

UNCE members, Cottonwood Heights City residents, and Cottonwood Heights City Council members, Tali Bruce and Christine Mikell teamed up to drive the successful initiative. UNCE members attended citizen meetings, City Council meetings, supported letter writing campaigns, ran phone banks, and contacted local businesses for support. Those efforts were sufficient to swing all five Council members to vote in favor of the designation.

Cottonwood Heights will now designate resources to achieve its clean energy goals. A likely first step will be to add solar panels to the new city hall, making it a “net zero” facility. This means the facility will generate the same amount of power that it consumes. The city is also studying the possibility of converting the city fleet to electric vehicles, and purchasing green power from the local utility, Rocky Mountain Power.

Moving forward, the UNCE team is focusing on encouraging more local cities to adopt their own Ready for 100 plans. If you are interested in getting involved with this dynamic clean energy team, the meetings take place on alternate Mondays at 5:30 pm at the Sierra Club offices in Salt Lake City. Email Lindsay for more details, at lindsay.bebee@sierraclub.org.

Rising Against Oil and Gas

by Carly Ferro

Utah public lands continue to face unprecedented threats and mounting industry pressure for dirty fuel development. This is facilitated by the administration’s dirty energy-dominated agenda that prioritizes fossil fuel extraction over environmental and public health. Every quarter, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offers oil and gas leases to the highest bidder. Their most recent sale continued the agency’s recent trends in placing sensitive cultural, archeological, and ecological lands up for grabs to dirty fuel developers. The March offering sold 90 parcels amounting to 135,125 acres, $9,069 acres of which (25 parcels) sold for the minimum bid of $2/acre. While the original sale planned to auction 156 parcels, 45 received deferrals, citing sage-grouse habitat and the need for further environmental review. While seemingly positive, the deferral follows a recently finalized sage-grouse plan that weakens protections for the species. It is theorized that deferring the sage-grouse parcels allowed for the weakened plan to be implemented and ease developers permitting processes.

Since the Trump administration took office, they have leased 3.1 million acres of public lands to industry and, of that, 647,000 acres went for the minimum bid of $2/acre. While the lease sale results and continued pressures on our lands can be daunting, the glimmer of hope resides in the growing youth movement in Utah that is leveraging logical requests and support to push for a reevaluation of political priorities. On the heels of the Global Climate Strike, and in opposition to the March lease sale, students collected over 1,500 signatures on a petition asking the Governor to take action on climate change by opposing such sales. About 50 people delivered the petition to the Governor’s Deputy Chief of staff and participated in a sit-in at the Capitol singing, chanting and giving testimony about the importance of taking steps to mitigate climate change. The continued thread of student-led actions coupled with an ever-expanding inclusive environmental movement in Utah is creating a climate ripe for political change.

With another oil and gas lease sale in June set to jeopardize lands adjacent to the Great Salt Lake and critical to migratory birds, we know that the actions will continue. As more and more people become engaged and take action we allow the movement to evolve and continue to fortify the grassroots strength in forging change. We hope you will join us and continue to support student efforts to build a better future for Utah.

You can view a parcel map of proposed leased lands for the June sale and all future sales at our partner’s website, which hosts an interactive map developed in collaboration with The Wilderness Society. https://rockymountainwild.org/oil_and_gas/utah. You can also learn more and participate in future actions and receive updates by emailing us at utah.chapter@sierraclub.org and include “rise against oil and gas,” in the subject line! Together, we can help push and succeed in seeing the protections for our public lands'
Duck Creek, Update Citizen Science, and Sage Grouse

By Jim Catlin

Duck Creek is a small stream east of Bear Lake and north of Randolph, Utah. Long gone now, ducks swam in ponds created by beavers using willow branches and boughs. Only the name remains today. The BLM grazing allotment in this stream includes rolling open sagebrush hills with several streams and numerous springs. For the past twenty years, this area has been the focus of management innovation, monitoring, and controversy. Used in discussions with the county, ranchers, Utah State University scientists, and agencies, the field data on wildlife habitat conditions gathered by the conservation community, including Utah Sierra Club Chapter volunteers, have not only fueled this controversy.

This story takes some interesting twists with Trump’s team stepping in to essentially cancel science whenever scientific data conflict with agency decisions. But he patiently, I am ahead of myself.

These sagebrush lands are home to sage grouse which is one of the few species that can live as they always have in the winter, just on eating sagebrush. These ‘greater sage-grouse’ (Centrocercus urophasianus) are ecologically important as an indicator of general ecological health of the habitat and their population has been in decline in Utah and elsewhere throughout its range. More than 350 native species range-wide are also at risk due to loss of or degradation of sagebrush habitat, which has been occurring since the west was settled.

Sage grouse population is monitored by counting males in leks in March and April. When counting in Utah began in 1959, the average number of males per lek, averaged statewide, was over 30 males per lek. In 2017, the average males per lek is 12 and continuing to decline. If you want to view sage grouse, join the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources at a lek near Price on the 8th of April.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a finding on a petition to list the greater sage grouse as an endangered species. This agency found that listing was “warranted, but precluded by higher priority listing actions”. On an issue that has enormous political backlash over a wide area, this response was expected. If used, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 is one of the most effective conservation laws we have. When a species approaches extinction, the federal government must act to prevent the loss of a species. Other federal and state laws are often vaguer and, under pressure from land users, wildlife protection can be circumvented. If listed, sage grouse protection would affect nearly 100 million acres in the west and possibly have an observable, measurable data. For example, we measured the remaining height of a sedge along the edge of streams at the end of the crusty grazing season. This is the same measure that BLM also recommends. We also measured by clipping the amount of grass and forbs in a 1 meter square placed on the ground. We used our cages to measure ungrazed herbaceous plant production and also additional measurements from sample squares in grazed areas. We wanted to compare our data with that BLM reported in their annual monitoring. BLM’s methods were subjective, relying on expert interpretation to reach conclusions. For measuring grazing use, BLM would walk a transect and, for two foot intervals, examine a key grass species plant and guess the percent of the plant that cow and others had eaten.

In two of our published studies, the years of data we collected showed that riparian areas were heavily grazed well beyond BLM’s allowed standard. Five years of our data show that BLM utilization measurements away from riparian areas was 31% less that utilization we measured.

It is a challenge to convince people that something important is missing in today’s sagebrush steppe. I remember growing up seeing extensive sagebrush lands thinking that this is now as it always was. However that isn’t the case. Traditional grazing use has reduced the total quality and cover of native grasses. In the case of the Duck Creek today we see roughly one half of the grass growing that should be there. When growing up, I had no idea of what it looked like 200 years ago. For most of us, the media, agency staff, and the rancher, we just don’t know what is missing. The wildlife do know this and you can see the impacts to sage grouse in their declining numbers.

In 2009, BLM issued a grazing allotment permit decision for Duck Creek. As with almost all grazing permits, this renewal kept grazing at the same number of livestock. A new management plan was adopted, one that divided the allotment into four pastures and permitted grazing each with cattle for one month, in effect, a rotational grazing system. Western Watersheds Project and the Wild Utah Project appealed this decision arguing that sage grouse needs were not met. We argued that BLM’s rotational grazing with high numbers of livestock would continue continue excessive grazing use especially in riparian areas.

Appeal of decisions are heard before the Department of Interior’s Office of Hearings and Appeals. The 5½ day hearing before a judge in the Office of Hearings and Appeals was the longest of any grazing case up to that point. The hearing transcript was 15,000 pages. The burden of proof noted with the appeal was not there.

In 2013, the judge ruled in our favor argued that our citizen science was credible and BLM had failed to consider sage grouse needs when making their grazing decision. This ruling sent the Duck Creek Allotment decision back to BLM for them to begin again on designing a remedy for the problems the judge highlighted. This ruling had a far-reaching effect. It found that BLM’s standard methods for assessing conditions in allotments and renewing permits did not consider sage grouse. This ruling found that BLM’s monitoring methods also appeared to have serious problems in accurately reporting habitat problems. There was a likelihood this decision applied to thousands of allotments in Utah and elsewhere.

BLM immediately appealed this ruling to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. The Obama Administration did nothing about this, letting it sit until President Trump took office. In September of 2017, BLM ruled reversing the ruling we had in IBLA, and it needs to be overturned.” In January of this year Advocates for the West noted, “The Duck Creek decision sets a dangerous precedent that effectively bars conservationists from ever being successful before IBLA, and it needs to be overturned.” In January of this year Advocates for the West filed a lawsuit in federal court to challenge this IBLA ruling. More will be heard about this in the future. The Sierra Club is not a party in this case.
Hot off the press, BLM recently announced a redo of land use plans that were supposed to conserve sage grouse. In Utah, ten BLM and Forest Service plans were amended in order to “improve” alignment with State management strategies and plans for Greater Sage Grouse, while continuing to conserve, enhance, and restore Greater Sage Grouse and its habitat.” It would be generous to say that in dozens of places, conservation measures in these plans were waived, weakened, or reversed. It would be less generous to say that these plans lied about sage grouse population changes, letting the state and BLM falsely claim things are good and sage grouse conservation can be relaxed.

These land use plans call for increased protective actions if sage grouse numbers decline. BLM uses the slope of a graph of sage grouse monitoring data to determine if change is needed. If the slope of the graph is upward which indicates that the population is increasing then current management is considered working. If the slope is downward, then management should change in order to reverse this slope. Unfortunately, BLM in cooperation with the state has gamed the system. As a result, most sage grouse management regions in Utah are reported by the state to have a positive sage grouse population slope. Because it is too expensive to count every animal, sampling of different sites is needed to determine if change is needed. If the slope of the graph is upward which indicates that the population is increasing then current management is considered working. If the slope is downward, then management should change in order to reverse this slope. Unfortunately, BLM in cooperation with the state has gamed the system. As a result, most sage grouse management regions in Utah are reported by the state to have a positive sage grouse population slope.

In 2018, BLM again issued new grazing permits for Duck Creek Allotment. No environmental analysis, no public input, no notice of any decision was provided to interested public. We are in a new political world.

Duck Creek serves as a model for problems and perhaps remedies for most of our public lands. If you are interested in joining me in the field for some citizen science, drop me a line at jim@wildutahproject.org.

Because it is too expensive to count every animal, sampling of different sites is needed to determine if change is needed. If the slope of the graph is upward which indicates that the population is increasing then current management is considered working. If the slope is downward, then management should change in order to reverse this slope. Unfortunately, BLM in cooperation with the state has gamed the system. As a result, most sage grouse management regions in Utah are reported by the state to have a positive sage grouse population slope.

In 2018, BLM again issued new grazing permits for Duck Creek Allotment. No environmental analysis, no public input, no notice of any decision was provided to interested public. We are in a new political world.

Duck Creek serves as a model for problems and perhaps remedies for most of our public lands. If you are interested in joining me in the field for some citizen science, drop me a line at jim@wildutahproject.org.
Utah Chapter Outings

MAY/JUNE 2019

Abreviations in capital letters signify the group planning the outing.


All members and nonmembers are welcome on any of the chapter or group activities listed. Radios, firearms and dogs are not welcome on Sierra Club outings. Interested participants are strongly encouraged to contact the outing leader in advance and inquire as to updates, degree of difficulty, and other outing details. Participants should be prepared for various seasonal weather conditions, temperature changes that occur due to rapid increases in altitude, and bring enough food, water, and appropriate clothing for the given outing. Outing leaders reserve the right to turn away anyone who appears unprepared for scheduled outings.

---

UtahSierraClub.org Spring 2019

---

Glen Canyon Group

GGG Sat 5/18 Buckhorn Wash. Buckhorn Wash is a famous rock art site in the San Rafael Swell about two hours northwest of Moab. We will drive through the Wash, taking several short hikes to see as much as we can. We will be exiting through the Barrier Canyon-style rock art panels, a dinosaur track site, and an arch with a ruin under it. Total hiking distance in the Wash will be less than three miles and is rated as easy, except for the last hike to the arch which will barely nudge into the moderate category. If time and in-permit permits, we will stop for a three mile hike to 50’ Obscure Arch on the way out to the interstate. This optional hike is rated moderate. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Thomas Messenger (435) 259-1756 messenger35@gmail.com.

GGG Sat 6/8 Leprechaun Leeprechaun Canyon and Hog Springs A North Wash. From Hanksville, we will head south on Highway 95 towards Hite. At about milepost 28, we will park to begin the hike. This is the trailhead for Leprechaun. For this non-technical hike, we will hike up the Leprechaun Canyons bottom to see some astounding narrow canyons and slot sections. There is one small fall to circumvent (Class 4), but it is otherwise easy going to the junction of the right and middle forks. Once up the canyon on the middle fork, the canyons narrow and narrows dramatically. Just beyond where the right Fork comes in, the canyon narrows tight enough most will have to turn sideways to fit. This is the turnaround for most hikers, though some may want to continue up with increasingly difficult obstacles. At some point, we will be forced to return to the cars, where we will continue south on 95 to milepost 33, the Hog Spring Rest area and the trailhead. The Hog Springs hike follows a well-traveled trail up along the stream. It passes a couple of small pools before reaching a dryfall and deep pool so or so minutes from the trailhead. In almost all conditions, you can keep your feet dry. There are pictographs and petroglyphs in the area. Side trip planned to the Moki Queen - a large pictograph 1-2 minutes south of the Hog Spring rest area. Leprechaun Canyon, moderate hiking due to scarce water and negotiating narrow slots, 1-3 hours. Some of the slots are VERY narrow wear clothes you don’t mind sacrificing to the canyon! A headlamp may be helpful, depending on how far you go in. if you are claustrophobic, this may not be the hike for you! Hog Springs, easy hiking, 1-2 hours. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Tammy Berrie (435) 260-0462 southeasternutamby@yahoo.com.

GGG Sat 6/22 The Very End. Trailhead requires a fair amount of driving with an adventure aspect. Help us hike up Punky Well road and then west on Spring canyon point road after about 7.8 miles a right turn on the Oil Well trail. A possible first or last short hike from a wash goes into an enormous cave with a hole in the roof that looks like a golf tee. It is possible to get on top and in and out the hole from the top also. During the road down, you can park and explore to the left rim to see some spectacular overlooks into the Green River, side canyons and even the Green River, 10 mile canyon confluence on the right. There also some interesting arches in the area. It might be possible to some desert big horn sheep also. A considerable amount of the hiking would be scrambling with some moderate exposure. Meet at: Parking lot, former Red Rock Elementary School, at 8:00 AM. Leader: Thomas Messenger (435) 259-1756 messenger35@gmail.com.

Ogden Group

Saturday, May 11: Indian Trail. This moderately strenuous hike is 4 miles long with an elevation gain of 1450 feet. It is a popular trail that follows a route once used by Native Americans. The trail begins in Ogden Canyon and ends at 22nd St. Trailhead. We will reach a lookout point at 6100 feet where views into Nevada are possible on a clear day. A car, at 8:00 AM for meeting place and time.

Sunday, May 19: Ogden Foothills Weed Eradication. Help us keep our adopted area in Ogden’s foothills weed-free, while enjoying some exercise among the spring wildflowers. We’ll start out early and finish by noon. Call Dan Schroeder at 803-393-4603 for location and other details.

Thursday, July 4: Mollen’s Hollow Overlook Hike. Join us for our 17th annual hike atop this scenic plateau in the Monte Cristo range. Expansive vistas and spectacular wildflowers are guaranteed; and at only five miles round trip, it’s a great hike for families. The Sierra Club successfully fought a decade-long battle to keep this trail closed to motorized vehicles, but we now face a new challenge: the state of Utah’s petition to suspend protections for this and many other National Forest roadless areas across the state. Call Dan Schroeder at 803-393-4603 for meeting time and place.

Salt Lake Group

SLG Tues 5/14 Mt. Olympus to the Creek. Level: Moderate. This foothill hike up the Mt. Olympus trail offers a good 2 hour workout and wonderful views of the valley as we make our way through the spring flowers to the creek. It’s a 1300 foot climb so be prepared for some exercise! Meet at 6:30 pm. Meet at the Skyline High School parking lot, 3251 E. Upland Drive (3760 S.), next to the athletic field on the northwest area of the lot. No dogs please. Leader: Rebecca Wallace 801-557-5261; rebeccawallace38@msn.com.

SLG Tues 5/21 The Living Room. Level: Moderate. Yes, there is an actual Red Butte, a 6600-foot prominence which overlooks the canyon of the same name to the north. We’ll start on top of the popular Living Room trail in upper Research Park, but continue up Georges Hollow on a moderately steep trail to the summit. Expect about a four-mile round trip with 1600 feet of overall elevation gain. Meet at 6:30 pm on Colorow Rd. in the University of Utah Research Park, south of Tabby Lane where Colorow goes uphill. This is about ¼ mile south of the entrance to Red Butte Gardens and north of the entrance to Huntsville. No dogs please. Leader: Colleen (801) 554-7153, email colleen.mahaffey@gmail.com.

SLG Thurs 5/23 Affleck Park Nature Walk. Sample the avian life and floral displays on this leafy walk which starts at Affleck Park campground in Little Dell Canyon. We’ll stroll through the campground looking for birds and flowers, and then if conditions permit, continue on up the trail toward the ridge between Little Dell and Killyons Canyon. Bring foods with you with good traction, water, lunch, raingear and sun protection. Also bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. Expect a leisurely pace and about three miles of hiking overall. Meet promptly at 9:00 am at Rotary Glen Park on the south side of Sunnyside Ave., just east of Hogle Zoo. This is at the intersection of Sunnyside Ave. and Crestview Drive, by the stone monument with an eagle on top. Leaders: Fred and Bessann Swanson, (801) 588-0361; fsbwan32@msn.com.

SLG Tues 5/28 Little Mountain. Level: Easy. We’ll follow the ridgeline trail above Emigration and Little Dell canyons to the 7000’ crest of Little Mountain. Great views highlight this three-mile round trip hike, which is mostly rolling terrain through open meadows. There is a short, steep climb at the beginning and another, longer one to the summit. Total elevation change is about 800 feet. Bring water, a map, and a headlamp. Meet promptly at 6:30 pm at the parking lot on the south side of Sunnyside Ave. at the intersection of Crestview Drive, east of the Hogle Zoo. A stone monument with an eagle on top marks the spot. Leader: Fred and Bessann Swanson 801-588-0361; fsbwan32@msn.com.

SLG Tues 6/4 Jack’s Mtn. Level: Moderate. Jack’s Mountain rises above Salt Lake’s East Bench and offers great city views. We’ll climb a fairly steep ridgeline trail above the “H” Rock, to one or more high points on the ridge. sturdy footwear and a headlamp are recommended. Meet at the new Parley’s Way/Wal Mark parking lot, 2795 Parleys Way, west of the Bombay House Restaurant in SLC at 6:30 pm. No dogs please. Leader: Rebecca Wallace 801-557-5261; rebeccawallace38@msn.com.

SLG Sat 6/8 Adopt-a-Trail project, Terraces-Elbow Fork trail, Millcreek Canyon. Time: Saturday, June 8. We’ll meet promptly at 9:00 am at Rotary Glen Park on the south side of Sunnyside Ave., just east of Hogle Zoo. This is at the intersection of Sunnyside Ave. and Crestview Drive, by the stone monument with an eagle on top. Leaders: Fred and Bessann Swanson, (801) 588-0361; fsbwan32@msn.com.

ONLINE OUTINGS TOOL!

All the outings, and socials for the chapter are now found in one place. https://utahsierraclub.org/content/calendar.asp. You can sort by event type or use a built-in mapping function.
meet at the Terraces picnic area just below the winter gate. Participants should bring work gloves and eye protection, also hand trimmers/lopers and a hard hat if you have them. Registration is required and the group size limit is 15. For more details and to register, contact Fred Swanson, fbswan32@msn.com, (801) 588-0361 by June 1. Further work sessions are scheduled throughout the summer, with priority given to those attending this training session. Come help us take care of one of our favorite trails!

SLG Tues 6/11 Greens Basin.
Level: Easy+. A favorite evening beat-the-heat hike, the Greens Basin trail leads up through lush aspen and conifer stands, ending in a shady meadow away from the bustle of Big Cottonwood Canyon. The hike is 4 miles round trip with 800 feet elevation gain, and parts of the trail are steep. Headlamps recommended. Meet at 6:30 pm at the 6200 South Park and Ride lot, 6450 South Wasatch Blvd. (1 mi north of the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon). Leader: Kandace 801-831-6933; kcstandman@hotmail.com

SLG Thur 6/13 Mount Aire saddle.
Level: Moderate. We’ll climb a steep but nicely shaded trail to a high saddle with views down Parley’s Canyon. Expect about 1200 feet in a mile of climbing to the saddle, another 800 to the summit. Bring lunch/snacks and at least 2 liters of water, Leashed dogs are welcome; please follow all applicable Millcreek Canyon rules regarding dogs. Meet at 8:30 am at the east side Skyline High School parking lot 3251 E. Upland Drive (3760 S). Leader: Jim Paull 801-580-9079; paull.james.f@gmail.com

The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assume no liability for them. Carpooling, ridesharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. If you choose to carpool to the trailhead, it is only fair for fees charged by the US Forest Service to be shared by all participants. Text of the outings liability waiver may be found at http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/sign waivers/PDF-CAST-2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

SummerServiceOuting
BOOK CLIFFS IN DESOLATION CANYON WSA
SATURDAY 6/15 – SUNDAY 6/16
Desolation Wilderness Area (the bill was just signed March 12 turning it from WSA to wilderness) Service Trip June 15/16. The BLM is months behind so they cannot support any service outings in April nor May. So we will be high in the Book Cliffs just as it is getting hot in the desert. Specific details need to be worked out with the BLM. Expect a dry camp. We will work on Saturday and explore our new wilderness on Sunday. High clearance vehicles are required. Leader will help facilitate carpooling. Contact Will McCarvill at 801-694-6958 will@commercialchemistries.com to register.

COMMUNITY WINE & WRITING - SALT LAKE AREA
SATURDAY 6/1 - SUNDAY 6/2 Book Cliffs in Desolation Canyon WSA.
Communit...
LocalNews

Legislative Lowdown
by Ashley Soltysiak

T he clock struck eleven on March 14th and both chambers of the Utah State Legislature finished early with the chimes triumphantly declaring the end of the 2019 legislative session. It was a seat of democracy.

From a Mexican coal port, to an attempted ban on plastic bag regulation, to a dramatic showdown over drought, the 2019 session was anything but dull. It kept our lobby team fighting until nine die but Utah Sierra Clubbers didn’t leave empty handed.

In the rundown of the top 20 bills for which we pushed during the last 45 days. First, have a look at the worst of the worst, which passed despite the valiant eff-

SB248 - Thoroughput Infrastructure Amendments from Sen. Okerlund (R-Minneola) grossly misuses nearly $55 million in Community Impact Board funds to pay for a coal port in Mexico. (Yes, you read that right.) These funds are intended to pay for public infrastructure projects to help communities cope with the boom and bust cycles that come with fossil fuel economies, but instead they’re being leveraged to fur-

HB220 - Radioactive Waste Amendments from Rep. Francis Gibson (R-Mapleton) passed amid consternation from advocates and Salt Lake City Mayor, Jackie Biskupski. This bill allows the Utah State Senate to regulate any class B or C level radioactive waste, and reinforcing EnergySolutions’s impending threat of global climate change.

The second of the worst, atop our list, is HB230 - Container Act Regulation from Rep. Mike McKell (R-Orange County) which was an ALEC bill that the Utah Sierra Club and Sen. Kirk Cullimore (R-Draper) would have also sent much needed money to public transit, telecommuting programs, and air quality monitoring.

All in all, it was a tough session, but we’re proud of the progress we made in this very red state. We want to sincerely thank our allies with whom we fought arm in arm over the length of the session to protect Utah’s quality of life, protect our communities and the environment.

And finally, the positive bills that passed the 2019 session and will now help to transform Utah!

HB314 - Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Vehicles from Rep. Ward (R-Bountiful) aimed to re-energize the electric vehicle tax credit to the tune of $1000 per qualifying vehi-

HB314 - Motor Vehicle Emissions Amendments from Rep. Angela Romero (D-Salt Lake City) passed this year and now increases penalties for vehicles that violate the Clean Air Act. Coal roller bills all, it’ll now cost you $100 for the first violation and $500 for any subsequent violations.

SB353 - Reduction of Single Occupancy Vehicle Trips Pilot Program by Rep. Briscoe (D-Salt Lake City) saw a big budget cut, but still offers a half a million in funding for free fare days for public transit over the next 5 years. It also encourages private/public partnerships to increase funding for this program over the long term. This positive air quality bill will help reduce emissions from vehicles, which are currently completely half of our total emissions out of the Wasatch Front.

SB144 - Environmental Quality Monitoring Amendments from Sen. Luz Escamilla (D-Salt Lake City) creates a requirement for baseline environmental monitoring in the area near the proposed inland port. This monitoring is critical to ensuring that these communities are not treated as an environmental sacrifice zone, as increasing rail and truck traffic threaten the surrounding air and water resource.

Air quality appropriations were signific-

And, finally, the positive bills that passed the 2019 session and will now help to transform Utah!

SB52 - Secondary Water Requirements from Rep. Jake Anderegg (R-Lehi) is arguably the best water bill of the year. Though it was watered down in the Senate (pain intended) this is still a good bill to begin to curb our per capita water use. It makes it so many cities will have to begin monitoring their secondary water systems to track use. We’re still laughing at what Rep. Gibson had to say on the House floor in support of the bill, comparing it to his use of a fitness pal to curb food consumption.

HB81 - Construction Code Amendments from Rep. Mike Schultz (R-Hooper) is a mostly good bill which increases the stringency of the commercial energy code. The full update translates to an 8% reduc-

HB411 - Community Renewable Energy Act from Rep. Handy (R-Layton) is a unique piece of legislation which allows a city that has passed a renewable energy resolution to offer 100% of the city’s energy use with new renewable energy. This bill is a step in the right direction for a city looking to become truly carbon free. We do have some lingering concerns about whether the utility, Rocky Mountain Power, will actually implement the legislation in a cost effective way for the cities.